Human Rights Committee
114th session

Summary record of the 3171st meeting
Held at the Palais Wilson, Geneva, on Friday, 3 July, at 10 a.m.

Chairperson: Mr. Salvioli

Contents

Consideration of reports submitted by States parties under article 40 of the Covenant (continued)

Third periodic report of The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia (continued)
The meeting was called to order at 10 a.m.

Consideration of reports submitted by States parties under article 40 of the Covenant (continued)

Third periodic report of The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia (continued) (CCPR/C/MKD/3, CCPR/C/MKD/Q/3, and Add.1)

1. At the invitation of the Chairperson, the delegation of The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia took places at the Committee table.

2. Mr. Ristovski (The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia), replying to the Committee’s follow-up questions, said that the budget of the Ombudsman for 2015 had been increased by 2 per cent and currently stood at nearly 1.184 million euros.

3. Ms. Ivanova (The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia) said that 289 complaints of domestic violence had been filed in 2014 and 158 in the first quarter of 2015. As for the issue of discrimination against lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex (LGBTI) persons, she said that the Ministry of the Interior had held consultations with the national network formed to combat such discrimination and had organized two conferences on the problem of hate speech; a media campaign on the issue would be launched in December 2015. The Ministry had also signed a memorandum of partnership with the HERA Association for Health Education and Research to collaborate on promoting the rights of the LGBTI community.

4. Ms. Stanchevska (The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia) said that her Government had been very active in providing training to the police with a view to improving their treatment of all minority groups, including the Roma and Turkish minorities. A pilot project on that subject was being conducted in the city of Strumica; once evaluated, it would be extended to the entire country. Her Government was making an effort to reach out to marginalized groups and encourage them to become law-abiding citizens. Activities undertaken in the context of the 2014–2020 Strategy for the Roma included preparation of a handbook to explain to undocumented Roma how to obtain identity documents and efforts to discourage begging. More activities were planned for 2016, with particular emphasis on education for Roma children.

5. Mr. Samardjiski (The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia), responding to the Committee’s concerns about the recent replacement of five members of the Constitutional Court, said that the judges’ term of office had simply come to an end. He explained that the Constitutional Court was made up of nine judges, elected by Parliament, three of whom had to be from minority communities. Two were nominated by the Judicial Council, two by the President and five by Parliament. They served one nine-year term with no possibility of re-election. He added that the Constitutional Court was independent from the judicial branch; the Judicial Council therefore had no authority over the Court.

6. Ms. Ajdari (The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia), referring to the right to trial within a reasonable time under article 9, paragraph 3, of the Covenant, said that the Law on Criminal Procedure and the Law on Civil Procedure had been amended to allow the Supreme Court to hear appeals relating to undue delays in the lower courts. As a result, the many appeals to the European Court of Human Rights citing undue delay had been virtually eliminated; only 10 such cases remained before that Court, all predating the recent reform. The European Court of Human Rights, in Adzi-Spirkoska and Others v. the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, had in fact found that the right of appeal to the Supreme Court constituted an effective domestic remedy. She added that a constitutional amendment was envisaged in order to make recourse to the Supreme Court the ultimate domestic remedy for all legal issues, including constitutional matters.
7. **Ms. Gavrilovska** (The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia) said that the courts and the Ombudsman were responsible for monitoring conditions in the prison system. The bill to amend the Law on the Ombudsman would strengthen the Office of the Ombudsman, making it the national preventive mechanism for the prevention of torture as required under the Optional Protocol to the Convention against Torture. The Ombudsman would cooperate closely with interested NGOs in that regard. A new strategy for improving management of the prison system, launched in May 2015, would strengthen the powers of the inspection services to undertake inspections, highlight problems, order corrective measures and develop new guidelines for inspections. In addition, the Law on the Execution of Sanctions would be amended to create a special bureau of inspections to monitor prison conditions.

8. **Mr. Iwasawa** expressed concern that the new Law on Termination of Pregnancy maintained many of the same requirements as the previous law, including a mandatory written request, mandatory counselling and a three-day waiting period. Although the new law provided for the possibility of an abortion being performed in urgent cases where the life of the mother was in danger without first applying to the committee of doctors designated to approve abortions, the Committee had been informed that most doctors would hesitate to proceed for fear of negative consequences if they acted on their own. He wondered if the delegation would care to comment.

9. **Ms. Seibert-Fohr**, referring to paragraph 10 of the list of issues, welcomed the State party’s efforts to reform the judicial system, for example by prioritizing judicial independence, but stressed that it was not enough to create new structures and institutions; reforms must be implemented. She expressed concern that the European Commission, in its 2014 Progress Report, had noted some risk of backsliding in the State party in the areas of judicial independence and the fight against corruption. She stressed that judges must have security of tenure and said that the current law on disciplinary measures was complex and vague; disciplinary proceedings before the Judicial Council should be made more transparent.

10. The quality of justice must be improved, in particular by improving the training of judges. She acknowledged that since January 2013 all judges appointed to the courts of first instance must be graduates of the Academy for Judges and Prosecutors, but the Committee had been informed of a shortfall in recruits to and graduates from the Academy. She also wondered whether judges were promoted solely on the basis of merit or rather the number of cases they disposed of.

11. A competent and respected judiciary was essential for developing public trust in the courts, as was a court system free of political interference. In that regard, she noted delays and compromises in cases before the Constitutional Court, including the Court’s rejection, in 2014, of an initiative to examine the constitutionality of the controversial Lustration Law. What had been the reasons for that rejection and what measures were in place to protect the Court from political influence?

12. **Mr. de Frouville** said that, despite the delegation’s assurances to the contrary, the Committee had information that the Government had at times, through its actions and declarations, appeared to encourage hostility against the lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex (LGBTI) community, and he expressed surprise that according to the delegation’s replies only one of six complaints relating to the burning of a facility owned by the LGBTI community had resulted in a conviction. He was also concerned that the new Law on Termination of Pregnancy maintained many of the restrictions on abortion contained in the previous law and that a recent awareness campaign on abortion had in fact had the effect of stigmatizing abortion.

13. Turning to the case of **El-Masri v. the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia** in the European Court of Human Rights, he noted that the Committee of Ministers of the
Council of Europe had found the State party’s follow-up to the Court’s ruling to be unsatisfactory and he wondered whether the State party envisaged any further action. He also recalled the Committee’s concerns as expressed in its previous concluding observations about the broad application of the Law on Amnesty for crimes committed during the civil war and requested clarification on the jurisdiction of the Constitutional Court and the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia in that regard. He also requested information on any cases of disappeared persons still under investigation.

14. Sir Nigel Rodley welcomed the State party’s efforts to improve the monitoring of places of detention and the designation of the Ombudsman as the national preventive mechanism for the prevention of torture. He expressed concern, however, that according to the Helsinki Committee for Human Rights, in a case where a guard at Idrizovo prison had severely beaten a detainee, who had required extensive surgery, that guard had been prosecuted for inflicting grievous bodily harm under article 131 of the Criminal Code rather than for torture under article 142. Although the guard had eventually been sentenced to 6 months in prison, increased to 18 by the appeals court, he had continued to work throughout the court proceedings, which constituted a violation of article 13 of the Convention against Torture regarding protection of the complainant as well as the related article 7 of the Covenant. He wondered if the delegation wished to comment.

15. The delegation, in response to the Committee’s concerns about police brutality, had dealt only with brutality against the Roma, and had suggested that the solution was better training. The Sector for Internal Control and Professional Standards of the Ministry of the Interior received about 60 complaints a year about police misbehaviour, most of which were never investigated. According to the Helsinki Committee, since 2010 223 complaints about the police had been submitted to the Ombudsman, of which 40 were related to articles 142 and 143 of the Criminal Code on, respectively, torture and abuses committed in the course of official duties. The Helsinki Committee had reviewed the validity of those 40 cases and decided to make formal complaints in 12 cases. The delegation should explain why there had been no follow-up or prosecution in any of those cases and provide information on all proceedings involving articles 142 and 143 of the Criminal Code and/or police mistreatment that might constitute a violation of article 7 of the Covenant.

16. The Chairperson expressed alarm at the number of cases of domestic violence in the State party and requested information on the number of prosecutions undertaken and the number of convictions obtained.

17. Mr. Smokovski (The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia), referring to the new Law on Termination of Pregnancy, said that the requirements of a written request and mandatory counselling had been in effect under the previous legislation on abortion but had not been implemented since 1990, when the socialist regime had ended. It was not necessary to apply to a committee of doctors in order to terminate a pregnancy of less than 10 weeks.

18. Mr. Samardjiski (The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia) said that the Judicial Council was responsible for safeguarding the independence of the judiciary. The Government had taken steps to address some of the system’s failings, including the introduction of in-service training for judges. Judges’ mandates were secure and unlimited. There were no mass dismissals of judges; only four had been removed from the bench in 2014 after having been found guilty of misapplying the law. While in the past some judges had been elected without graduating from the Academy for Judges and Public Prosecutors, the law was now strictly adhered to and all of the recently elected judges had come through the Academy. The next elections of judges would take place the following week. Nevertheless, more needed to be done to attract
individuals to the Academy, which provided a year of theoretical training followed by a year of practical training, and to a career as judge or prosecutor. Regarding disciplinary procedures against judges, he said that, pursuant to the Law on Changing and Supplementing the Law on the Courts, dismissals were no longer put forward by the Judicial Council. Disciplinary measures would be integrated into a single procedure. Judges were evaluated on the basis of the number and quality of their decisions, as well as the extent to which they met procedural deadlines.

19. **Mr. Iwasawa**, referring to the reply to questions raised in paragraph 13 of the list of issues, requested assurance that efforts to prevent bogus asylum seekers from the State party from entering European Union countries did not unduly limit freedom of movement. The Committee would appreciate an answer to its questions regarding the ethnic profiling of the Roma and the constitutionality of the Law on Travel Documents. He invited the delegation to comment on reports that the statutory time limits for the consideration of asylum applications were exceeded; that unaccompanied minors were not being assigned guardians promptly or even at all, as claimed by the State party; and that migrants in transit to Western European countries were detained for extended periods without being brought before the courts.

20. **Mr. Ben Achour** commended the State party on its openness, clarity and candour. Noting that, in 2010, religious instruction had been reintroduced at the sixth-grade level, he asked how that was reconciled with the Constitutional Court decision of 15 April 2009. The Committee had received information indicating that the Orthodox Archbishop of Ohrid, the head of a denomination very similar to the Serbian Orthodox Church, had been applying for official registration of his religious community since 2004, to no avail. He wished to know the reasons for the denial of official status and whether the Macedonian Orthodox Church enjoyed preferred status. He invited the delegation to comment on reports that the re-establishment of the national Association of Journalists was a barrier to freedom of the press, that journalists were detained and ejected from the parliament and that the Government was manipulating information through advertising campaigns and by placing journalists under surveillance. He asked how article 319 of the Criminal Code, on the decriminalization of libel and insult.

21. **Ms. Waterval** asked why all children were not registered at birth, whether birth registration was free and, if not, what the fee was. She wished to know whether the project to provide the population with identification numbers was ongoing or had a closing date and whether DNA analyses as a means of identification would continue given the cost of such procedures. She also asked whether children without identification documents had access to social services and attended school. She requested further details about the concrete proposals mentioned in paragraph 119 of the replies to the list of issues. She asked what the number of child beggars was, how many had been removed from the streets, what the process for doing so was, whether they were placed with foster families or in institutions, whether they were subject to follow-up and what was the situation regarding children in conflict with the law. She enquired about the outcome of the review of special school curricula and the rationale behind Roma-only schools. Lastly, she invited the delegation to comment on the situation of prisoners from minority backgrounds.

22. **Ms. Jelić** welcomed the measures taken by the State party, including its joint efforts with European partners, to include Roma children within the educational system. She was concerned, however, about the continuing segregation of Roma in schools and the relatively low take-up of preschool opportunities by Roma. She asked about the number and performance of university students who had received scholarships under the Roma Education Fund in the previous academic year. She
CCPR/C/SR.3171

requested comparative statistical data on the number of Roma students who had received additional support through scholarships and the number of those who had graduated to date. She asked whether the 2012 initiative to train Roma teachers had been repeated in subsequent years and, if so, how many teachers had been trained. She asked the delegation to provide specific information on the results of the programmes introduced under the project entitled “Support to the Integration of Ethnic Communities in Education”, referred to in paragraphs 135 to 140 of the State party’s replies to the list of issues (CCPR/C/MDK/Q/3/Add.1).

23. She asked whether permanent residence in the State party was a precondition for inclusion on electoral registers or whether proof of citizenship was sufficient. Was dual citizenship recognized by the State party and, if so, how many bilateral agreements in that regard had been concluded to date? What steps were being taken to register Roma people? Referring to paragraph 144 of the replies to the list of issues, she asked how many individual requests to inspect the electoral register had been submitted under article 48 of the Electoral Code. Could the delegation provide details of the “legally established procedure” referred to in that paragraph? Lastly, she asked when the working group established to monitor the electoral register had become operational and what results it had achieved.

24. Mr. Shany said that concerns had been raised about the pretrial detention of some 15 individuals following the 5 May 2015 demonstrations in Skopje, in particular in view of the mild nature of the charges against them and the importance of protecting the free exercise of the right of assembly. He therefore wished to know whether the individuals concerned had been released and why alternatives to detention had not been considered. He asked the delegation whether it had conducted any investigations into claims that violence had been used against demonstrators and journalists and, if so, what their outcomes had been. More generally, he asked what progress had been made regarding the introduction of alternatives to detention.

25. Ms. Cleveland, noting that the State party had seen a significant increase in the number of asylum seekers in recent weeks, asked what steps were being taken to ensure that individuals received timely, individualized assessments of their potential asylum claims consistent with international standards. She wished to know what measures were being taken to find alternatives to the detention of irregular migrants and asylum seekers, whether asylum seekers had access to legal aid in a language that they understood and whether international organizations had unhindered access to those individuals.

26. Mr. de Frouville asked whether the State party had investigated claims that certain media presenters, such as Milenko Nedelkovski of Kanal 5, had made statements stigmatizing individuals who criticized the Government. What action was the Government taking in general to combat hate speech in the media?

27. Ms. Ajdari (The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia) said that, following the 2014 amendment of the Criminal Code, new offences had been introduced to tackle corruption, in particular in the private sector. In 2015 amendments had been made to the Law on Prevention of Corruption with a view to establishing improved mechanisms for identifying conflicts of interest. A working group established to amend the Code of Criminal Procedure was developing new legislation to provide institutional protection for whistle-blowers and to introduce a system of integrity in the public and private sectors. Acting upon recommendations made by the Council of Europe Group of States against Corruption (GRECO), the Government had increased the budget of the State Commission for the Prevention of Corruption by 44 per cent and had appointed additional staff. As part of its prevention efforts, the Commission had run educational and training programmes at all levels of the education system. The European Union (EU) had provided financial assistance under the Instrument for Pre-
Accession Assistance (IPA), with a view to enhancing information technology systems used to monitor potential cases of corruption.

28. **Mr. Ristovski** (The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia) said that the Government was also working to address high-profile corruption cases and to develop a system to provide electronic monitoring of cases throughout all stages of judicial proceedings.

29. **Ms. Geshkovska** (The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia) said that 14 persons had been convicted in connection with the attack on the offices of the Helsinki Committee for Human Rights in March 2013, referred to in paragraph 5 of the State party’s replies to the list of issues (CCPR/C/MDK/Q/3/Add.1). Prison terms of varying lengths had been imposed on seven of those convicted, while the remaining seven had been given suspended sentences. The case was currently before the Court of Appeals, but it had not been possible to hold the two scheduled hearings because of the absence of some of the concerned parties. With regard to the attack on lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex (LGBTI) persons on 17 November 2012, one person had been charged with preventing and interfering in a public gathering and committing an act of violence; the individual concerned had subsequently been sentenced by the trial court to 7 months’ imprisonment. The verdict had been appealed. The authorities were working to establish the identity of the perpetrators of two arson attacks against a facility in the old Turkish bazaar in Skopje. However, despite all the efforts of the Public Prosecutor’s Office and the police, no witnesses had yet been found and no relevant material evidence had been recovered from the scene that would enable investigators to identify the person or persons responsible. Investigations were continuing into the attack on the Damar cafe in Skopje in October 2014, and a request for international legal assistance was being prepared because some of the evidence involved material on social networks.

30. **Ms. Gavrilovska** (The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia), referring to the Idrizovo prison case raised by Sir Nigel Rodley, said that a member of the prison staff had been convicted of aggravated grievous bodily harm and sentenced to 18 months’ imprisonment. There had been insufficient evidence to lay charges under articles 142 or 143 of the Criminal Code. In another case of alleged ill-treatment of a detainee, the suspect had been immediately suspended from his duties in the prison concerned and then initially placed in pretrial detention. He had subsequently been transferred to the administration department of the prison pending trial, during which time he had had no contact with prisoners. Following his conviction in 2014, he had been dismissed from his post and barred from working within the prison system.

31. **Ms. Stanchevska** (The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia) said that guardians had been appointed for all 73 of the unaccompanied minors present in the asylum seekers’ reception centre in June 2015, in accordance with the Law on Asylum and Temporary Protection. The minors had been placed in a separate facility in line with relevant European standards and had access to, among other things, health care and psychosocial support. A Constitutional Court decision annulling the provisions of the Law on Travel Documents that allowed the authorities to revoke travel documents had entered into force on 25 June 2014. Regarding the processing of asylum applications, she said that 90 per cent of asylum applicants had left the reception centre concerned before a decision on their application had been reached. In order to address the shortfall in interpreting services for asylum seekers, a project had been launched to draw up a roster of certified interpreters in collaboration with the United Kingdom Embassy in Skopje. The project was due to be completed by early 2016.

32. The recent large-scale influx of asylum seekers and migrants in transit through the State party on their way to European Union member States had placed a severe strain on reception facilities. The Government was taking steps to address the situation
by building new accommodation facilities that met European standards, in particular for migrants in a vulnerable situation. A former military barracks was being refurbished and should be operational in the near future; European Union funding had also been requested for the building of a further facility. In addition, training had been provided for reception centre staff.

33. Regarding allegations that Roma seeking to leave the State party had been discriminated against, she said that the Law on Crossing the State Border and Movement in the Border Area required police officers to prevent illegal migration from the country, without discrimination of any kind. Although most of those who were stopped were Roma, she stressed that ethnic affiliation was not a criterion used in reaching a decision. Such decisions could be appealed before the courts.

34. Amendments had been made to the Law on Asylum and Temporary Protection in order to provide better legal protection for migrants from smugglers and in 2015 alone charges had been brought against 135 migrant smugglers. Foreign nationals reaching a border crossing who expressed an intention to file an asylum application were issued with a legal document allowing them 72 hours within which to file a claim, which they could choose to do at the border, at a police station, or at a reception centre, thus removing the need for migrants to rely on smugglers. The legal document did not permit foreign nationals to re-cross the border.

35. Mr. Chupi (The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia) said that religious education had been prohibited in all primary and secondary public schools although the teaching of the history of religion had been introduced in 2009.

36. Children with special educational needs were either taught with their peers at primary and secondary schools or they attended separate classes. Under the new inclusive process, the percentage of Roma children with special educational needs who were included in mainstream classes had increased while the numbers attending separate classes had dropped from 30 per cent in 2014 to 27 per cent in 2015. The Government was currently reviewing a recommendation to change the categorization of Roma children who were segregated in special schools and to ensure their inclusion in mainstream education. Children without identity documents had the same right to education as registered nationals of the Republic of Macedonia. In response to the request by Ms. Jelić for specific information, he said that exceptional progress had been made with respect to the education of Roma in the previous 10 years; for the seventh year in a row, the Government had awarded 600 secondary school scholarships to Roma students and Roma students were provided with additional educational support in order to help them to improve their school grades. Of the 600 scholarship students, 90 per cent had progressed to university, while 42 per cent of Roma students as a whole continued their education at university. The school dropout rate for Roma children was decreasing. Only seven Roma students had been enrolled at university in 1997 while more than 200 were enrolled at the present time. A teacher training option in Roma language and culture was currently being studied by 10 teachers, and teachers of Roma origin were included in Government training programmes. The twinning project under the Instrument for Pre-Accession Assistance (IPA) had provided the Government with European experience in managing an integrated education system, and the outcomes had included the introduction of intercultural elements in school books and multiculturalism in teacher training and in the training of school principals; awareness-raising among Roma parents with regard to the importance of education; and the training of Roma education mediators who would serve as a link between the Roma community and schools.

37. Ms. Kamberi (The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia) said that Roma children had been included in mainstream preschool education since 2006; preschools had Roma teaching assistants and Roma NGOs provided a link between the Roma
community and the kindergartens. Efforts had been made to ensure that all Roma had registration documents, but the task was lengthy and difficult since many Roma families had not been registered for generations. Roma without registration documents were not eligible to receive social security benefits. Some DNA analysis of Roma children had been undertaken as part of the registration process. Registration of births was free of charge and the charge of €3 to €5 to issue a birth certificate was waived for families in receipt of social security. A proposal to change the law on birth registration would be put before the Government in October 2015. Children who were forced to beg on the streets by their parents were placed in social care and the parents were prosecuted.

38. **Ms. Kikerekova** (The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia) said that there were regulations governing the treatment of unaccompanied children. In response to the questions asked by Ms. Waterval, she said that children in conflict with the law were not necessarily deprived of their liberty. Restorative justice was practised in most cases and 70 per cent of juvenile offenders were subject to supervision orders while only 4 per cent were sent to correctional facilities. In response to the questions on the drafting of the third periodic report, she said that the Government had formed a drafting group comprising NGOs and representatives of relevant bodies; the group had received advice from a representative of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights. A draft report on action taken in response to the recommendations of the Human Rights Committee following the second periodic review of The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia in 2008 had been posted on the website of the Ministry of Justice, inviting comments from NGOs; the views of interested parties had been included in the final report.

39. **Mr. Ristovski** (The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia) said that the allocation of government funds for media campaigns was regulated by a law on public procurement which was in line with international standards. The Government had undertaken to draft additional legislation on the allocation of such funds. A new media law had been drafted in cooperation with civil society and five television debates had been held on its contents. The draft law had been published on a government website for public comment. The law had been amended following submissions by an association of journalists.

40. **Ms. Geshkovska** (The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia) said that the journalist Mr. Kezarovski had been held in pretrial detention on legal grounds in accordance with a court decision. Mr. Kezarovski had served a prison sentence following his conviction and he had subsequently been released. No journalists had been tried in absentia although an investigation had been conducted against Mr. Zoran Božinovski under the former law on criminal procedure. The Public Prosecutor’s Office could issue proposals for pretrial detention but the courts were not bound by them. A case had been initiated against 17 persons, 13 of whom had admitted the offences with which they had been charged, and who had been held in pretrial detention in accordance with the law. Journalists were able to bring private lawsuits in cases of violence against them. Statistics would be provided in respect of domestic violence. Prosecutions were brought on behalf of victims of domestic violence but they were dropped by the Public Prosecutor if the injured party did not wish to press charges.

41. Allegations of excessive use of force against persons kept in police custody had been investigated; some police officers had been charged with misdemeanours and cases where persons had been subject to coercion had been recorded.

42. **The Chairperson** said that, in view of the limited time available, he would give the floor to Committee members for brief follow-up questions.
43. **Ms. Jelić** asked the delegation to respond in writing to reports that sick persons, persons with disabilities and prison inmates had been unable to vote in parliamentary elections. She asked how the Government intended to address that problem of unequal treatment during elections in the future.

44. **Ms. Waterval** asked what measures had been taken by the Government to resolve the problem of street children, especially children from the Roma community.

45. **Mr. Ristovski** (The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia) said that his Government appreciated the Committee’s questions and recommendations and would continue to rely on the support of the Committee in its efforts to effect the improvements to which it was committed.

46. **The Chairperson** said that the State party had engaged in a constructive dialogue. He thanked the delegation for the valuable oral and written replies provided to date. The Committee looked forward to receiving additional information in writing, including on the key areas of domestic violence; non-discrimination; the treatment of detainees; and prevention of torture; as well as on the potential introduction of a follow-up mechanism in relation to the decisions of the Committee.

*The meeting rose at 1.05 p.m.*